

SCHISM

TRY'D and CONDEMN'D

BY THE

SENTIMENTS

OF THE

Most Eminent WRITERS

AMONG THE

DISSENTERS.

Written for the

Conviction of GAIN-SAYERS, and
those who complain of PERSECUTION,
upon Occasion of the late Act for *Pre-*
venting the Growth of SCHISM.

By a LAY-HAND.

The Second Edition.

L O N D O N :

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may be had Mr. Clutterbuck's Book, mention'd in this
Piece.

SCOTT'S

TRADITION

BY THE

EDITORS

OF THE

Scottish Writings

AND

DISSEMINATION

OF THE

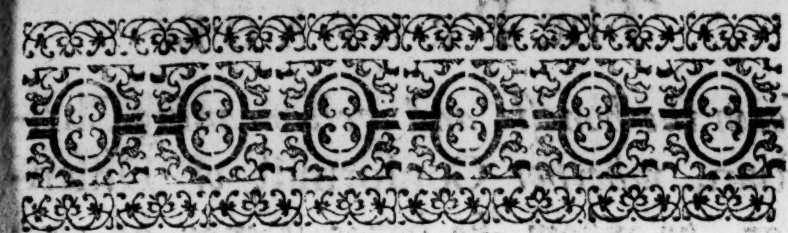
Constitution of GAIN-SAYERS, and
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LONDON:

J. W. Johnson, in Strand-Alley near
St. Dunstons Church; R. Gelling at
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THE PREFACE.



Considering the great Variety of Opinions and Humours that are in the World, and the course Treatment even of the most celebrated Authors, upon the most sublime Subjects; a Man had need to have a good Share of Courage, and a firm Assurance of the Justice of his Cause, that ventures to appear publickly in such a censorious Age.

The Author does presume he is thus supported; but declares, that what he has here written, is purely design'd to in-
A 2 *form*

The P R E F A C E.

form the honest and well-meaning Christian, whether Conformist or Dissenter, by whom he hopes it may be candidly receiv'd in Proportion to the Integrity of his Intentions.

*Upon the Publication of the Bill against SCHISM, I found that many People held hot Disputes for and against the Bill, who did not in Reality know what was meant by Schism ; and likewise since that, several pernicious Pamphlets have come Abroad, which, instead of convincing People what it was, have directly tended to confirm them in their Schismatical Principles. I waited for some Time, to see if the Learned would undertake to clear this Point, against those blind Leaders of the Blind : But being disappointed in that Expectation, I here present the World with such Thoughts as have occur'd to my own Reading and Experience : And I promise the Reader he shall find no Savour
of*

The P R E F A C E.

of a poyſonous Bitter in it, unleſs his inveterate Prejudice ſhall prompt him maliciously to pervert the peaceable Deſign of it.

I aſſure the World, that the Quotations are genuine ; and as the Collection is largely made from the Authors of greateſt Note among the Diſſenters, I hope it may ſerve to convince Men of their Sentiments of Schiſm, and leave the Brethren of the ſame Profeſſion, without any Poſſibility of Cavil or Answer.

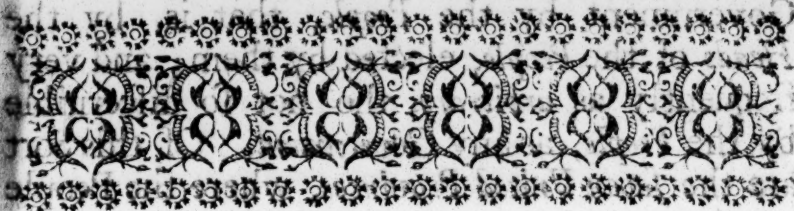
The whole was intended, and ready for the Preſs, before the Deceafe of our late moſt gracious and truly pious QUEEN ; but it is certainly not too late, even now, to promote Unity among our ſelves, and a moſt affectionate Loyalty, and filial Obedience, to our Sovereign Lord King GEORGE, which is beſt demonſtrated by our chearful

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ful Compliance with those wholesome Laws, which have been enacted for the Benefit of the Subject, and whereof his Majesty (under God) is the great Protector and Defender.

And now let every true-hearted Subject implore the Divine Goodness, to preserve him from all the Hellish Designs of his Enemies ; to bless him with Health of Body, and Soundness of Understanding ; with a numerous Progeny of long-liv'd Princes ; with wise and faithful Counsellors, and a truly Religious Clergy ; with an honest and judicious Magistracy, and an obedient Commonalty ; and when it shall please the Almighty King of Kings, to call him hence to the Kingdom of Glory, may it be after a long, very long, happy, and peaceable Reign over these Kingdoms ; which is the hearty Prayer of his Country's Well-wisher,

J. C.



SCHISM

Try'd and Condemn'd, &c.



THE Felicity of any *Kingdom* or *Nation*, consists in having wholesome and good *Laws* establish'd; the *supream Governor*, or *Governors*, conscientiously distributing Justice to all over whom they are set; as also, in having an *obedient People*, not only quiet and easy under the *lawful Commands* of their *Rulers*, but likewise ready and willing to assist at all Calls for the *National Good*; not murmuring at any Act of *Government*, that does not square with their *Opinions* or *Fancies*; but in all Things submitting themselves as becometh good *Subjects*, and faithful Servants of our Saviour *Christ*.

In the *World* are and have been many and different *Governments*. Not to speak of *Theocratical*, as *Patriarchal* and *Judicial*, under the old *Law*, which were of *God's* immediate *Appointment*;

pointment ; I shall take Notice of the three Sorts now in Being ; namely, *Lemocratical* ; a Government by the *People*, that is, by the *Heads* of the *People*, elected by them ; and very frequently as *arbitrary*, tho' not so discernible by the *People*, as any *Government*. Of this Sort are the *seven United Provinces*, where the *People* are kept under as great *Subjection*, as in any other Christian *Government*. Secondly, *Aristocratical*, viz. Government by *Nobles* ; of this Sort is *Venice*, where Government is likewise arbitrary ; and no Wonder, for that the *Popish Religion* is establish'd there, *that* and *arbitrary Power* being always inseparable. Thirdly and lastly, *Regal*, under which we are govern'd. And altho' this Sort of *Government* in other *Kingdoms*, be as *arbitrary* as any of the rest ; yet, to our *Glory* and *Happiness*, this of *Great Britain* is so order'd and settled by good and wholesome *Laws*, by mutual Agreement of the *King* and *People*, that when the *Prince* is conscientiously obey'd, *Justice* to the *People* equally distributed, and a harmonious *Agreement* among the *People* cultivated ; then is the *Prince* not only the most *powerful*, but also most *honourable*, and the *People* are most *prosperous* and *happy*.

And as the *Laws* of this Realm are made by the *King*, *Lords*, and *Commons* ; so do they tend to the *Good* of the whole. Tho' 'tis morally impossible to make any *Law*, that shall not be to the Detriment of some few, who must submit, as in all publick Affairs, the *Minor* to the *Major* : And it ought to be concluded, that the *Legislature*, from their great *Wisdom*, aiming at
the

the *National Good*, take all possible Precautions, that as few shall suffer as may be.

And as the *Constitution* of this Kingdom consisteth in the mutual Support of the *Prerogative* of the *Prince*, and of the *Liberties* and *Properties* of the *People*, so do the *People* quietly enjoy their *Rights* and *Liberties*, and also many Advantages by the *Prerogative*, that being intended for the *Good* of the *People* in general; and when the *Government* fails not to act righteously, is always so. As for those who will not conform to our happy Establishment, may we reasonably judge, they will never be easy under any *Government*. And tho' it is some Unhappiness to every Nation to have such *People* in it, for that they will certainly make others uneasy also; yet as it is the Business of those in *Authority*, to take all lawful Measures to preserve the *Constitution* sound, by cutting off the *rotten Members* of its Body; so will all good and peaceable Subjects rejoyce when the *Laws* are put in *Execution* against incorrigible *Offenders*. And without this coercive *Power* of the *Law*, no Man can securely rest in Possession of his just *Rights*, nor call any Thing his own.

And as the *Government* of this Land, in *Temporals*, is supported by the most wholesom and excellent *Laws*; so is it also in *Matters Spiritual*. Its *Hierarchy* is *Episcopal*: So that those in *Holy Orders* have a right *Ordination*, and by their excelling in Learning, are truly qualify'd to expound the *Holy Scriptures*; which accordingly they do to all that honestly and religiously conform themselves to the *establish'd Church*, which keeps the *Golden Medium* between the

two *Extreams*, viz. on one Side of the grand Abyſs of *Popery*, conſiſting of erroneous *Doctrines* in *Principles*, and *Idolatry* and *Superſtition* in *Worſhip*; and on the other hand, of the many-headed *Hydra* of confus'd *Seſts* and *Opinions*. And this is no light *Conjecture*, but ſolid *Truth* in every Particular, each of thoſe *Parties* aiming at the *Destruction* of this Church; the *Papiſt* principally at the whole *Reformation* throughout the World: The *Dissenters*, by being deluded by the *Romiſh Emiſſaries*, are perſuaded to believe, that the eſtabliſh'd *Worſhip* of this Land, is no other than the *Popiſh Maſs* it ſelf, and ſo are brought to abhor, not only the Matter of the *Common-Prayer*, but even the very Appellation or *Name* of it. And by the Inſtigation of the great *Enemy* of Mankind, and the aforeſaid *Incendiaries* of *Rome*, many are brought to an Abhorrence of a *Religious Conformity* with us, grounded upon ſuch Pleas as are in themſelves not only trifling, but ſo very vain, that, as the Apoſtle in another Caſe ſays, *'tis a Shame even to ſpeak of them*; all which have been by many *learned Men* of this Church, largely and amply confuted. The moſt *learned* among the *Dissenters* themſelves, when, and wherever they have been uppermoſt in *Government*, have condemn'd *Separation*, from what was then eſtabliſh'd, as *Schiſmatical*. Inſtances of this Kind there are innumerable: I ſhall not mention many, for that I mean not to ſwell this into a Volume, intending only by theſe, to ſhew the Ignorant the Nature of *Schiſm*, and dangerous Conſequence of continuing in it.

Schiſm

Schism then, in general, signifies *dividing*, or *separating*, in *Contempt of the Law*.

And with Relation to *Religion*, it imports a causeless *separating* from, or *not conforming* to the establish'd Church of the Nation wherein we live, being free-born Subjects. Some make Use of this *Plea*, viz. That they were born of *Dissenting Parents*, so were never of *us*, and how can they be said to go out *from us*? But this will appear very trifling, and can never take away the Charge of *Schism*, if we consider first, That all People are bound to obey the *Government*, in all Things commanded by them, that are lawful in the *Sight of God*; and secondly, That nothing is commanded, with Relation to *Religion*, but what is agreeable to the *Holy Scriptures*, which declare the Mind and Will of *God*. And this I shall endeavour to demonstrate from the following familiar *Syllogism*.

In every Country where the *Christian Religion* is nationally profess'd, the *Legislature* have Power to establish by a *Law*, a *Publick Worship* for the Service of *God*, and to appoint both *Time* and *Place* to assemble at, to perform the same; which shall bind the Consciences of all Subjects to obey the *Injunctions* laid on them by that *Law*, provided there be no *Heterodoxy* in the *Expositions* of the *Holy Scriptures*, nor *Idolatry*, or *Superstition*, allow'd in the *Publick Worship*. But, on the contrary, if the *Holy Scriptures* are orthodoxally expounded, the *Sacraments* of *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper* regularly and constantly administer'd, and the *Worship* of *God*, in Substance either taken out

cf, or agreeable to the *Holy Scriptures*, and Practice of the *primitive* and purest Churches in all Ages, from the *Apostles*, down to this present Time, if its *Ceremonies* be few, and the Manner of Performance, decent and orderly, tending to *God's Honour*, and the People's *Edification*: Whatever Church is thus settled, it cannot justly be deny'd to be a true Part of Christ's *Catholick Church*.

But the Church of England is thus establish'd in *Doctrine*, in *Sacraments*, in *Publick Worship*, both in *Substance*, and *Manner*, and *Ceremonies*, purely tending to *Decency* and *Order*, promoting *God's Glory*, and the better *Edification* of its Members.

Therefore, whoever, being *Native Subjects*, out of Pretence of better *Edification* from *Preaching*, or greater Purity in *Prayer*, do withdraw themselves from their Duty of attending in the *Parochial Churches*, either the *Preaching*, or the *Publick Worship*, and join themselves to separate *Meetings*, in Opposition to the establish'd Church, they are justly to be deem'd *Schismatics*; for that if they have been *Members* of it, they rend and tear themselves from it; or if they have not, they contumaciously refuse to join themselves to it. And in either of these Cases, (the Church of England, being not only a sound, but also the purest Part of Christ's *Catholick Church*) by thus dividing, they may justly be said to seperate, not only from *this Church*, but also from the *Holy Catholick Church*, profess'd in our Creed; and what the *Consequence* of that may be, I would to God they would seriously weigh. Nor can any *Law*, in
my

my Opinion, tho' it may exempt Men from the Penalty enjoin'd in the *Act* for Conformity, free the *Conscienc*es of those that refuse to conform to the aforesaid *National Establishment*; but such assuredly render themselves obnoxious to the just Judgment of him who is the God of Order, Love, and Unity, as being guilty of the Breach of this *Triple Bond*.

Now, I take it for granted, that this is a sufficient Definition of *Schism*, viz. The separating from, or refusing to join with so pure a *Church* as is this establish'd in this Land by the Natives of it. And that *Schism* is in its own Nature very sinful, will appear both from the many evil Consequences resulting from it, from the Opinions and heavy *Censures* laid on *Separatists* by the most eminent *Teachers* among both *Presbyterians*, and other Separatists.

In order to make this appear, let us consider how the *Presbyterian Church-Governors*, after they had brought *Episcopacy* into Obscurity, behav'd themselves towards those that did not conform to their *Establishment*. And I am apt to believe we shall find, upon Examination, their Notes strangely chang'd. For when the Church of *England* enjoy'd an entire Tranquility, then, not to grant *Liberty of Conscience* to all, and in the most extensive Sense, was *Persecution* in the superlative Degree. But when *John Presbyter* slipt into the Saddle, then *Liberty of Conscience* was a Sin of the first Magnitude. How! was *Tolleration*, when the Church of *England* was uppermost, absolutely necessary to be granted to all for *Conscience Sake*? And when the *Presbyterians* had wickedly got the *Domination*,

tion, was it then to be deny'd to all as an abominable Sin? This cannot but be thought by all well-meaning People, that are Strangers to *controversial Matters*, to be a *Paradox*: But it is *Matter of Fact*, and I shall plainly evince the *Truth* of it, from the *Sayings* of several of the most *Eminent* of them, in their *Sermons* deliver'd to their then *Governors*.

I shall begin with Dr. *Cornelius Burges*s.

In his Sermon, *Nov. 5. 1641*, he told the *House of Commons*, ' That the Church was laid ' waste, and expos'd to Confusion, under the ' plausible Pretence of not forcing Mens Con- ' sciences: And that to put all Men into a ' Course of Order and Uniformity in God's ' Way, is not to force the Conscience, but to set ' up God in his due Place, and to bring all his ' People into Paths of Righteousness and Life.

And in his *Sermon* before the *Commons*, *March* the 30th, 1642, speaking of the Incurableness of *Divisions*, when once got to a Head, ' Do ' you not (says he) see or hear daily of the Dis- ' orders, Sects, Rents, and Schisms, that every ' where bud forth already, and threaten all ' Order, Unity, and Government? And he il- ' lustrates, by a familiar *Simile*, the dangerous Consequence of a *dividing Temper*; ' For (says ' he) give the Water but a Passage, without ' making up the Banks, and you know how ' soon whole Seas will break in upon us, and ' render all irrecoverable and incurable. If ' one Difficulty occur to Day, 'twill be doubled, ' yea, multiply'd to Morrow. There is no Hy-

d: a

‘ dra so fertile of Heads, as Error and Schism,
 ‘ grown to some Strength and Maturity ; it
 ‘ will ask but a short Time of Connivance ;
 ‘ afterwards, there will be no curbing nor
 ‘ shaming of it. Nothing is so confident as
 ‘ Ignorance, impudent as Falshood, and catch-
 ‘ ing as Error.

The famous Mr. Calamy, in a Sermon before
 the Commons, October 22, 1644, charges them
 home.

‘ In case they are negligent in the Use of
 ‘ their Civil Power, to prevent these growing
 ‘ Evils, (says he, with an Emphasis upon the
 ‘ Words, *you* and *your* ;) if *you* do not labour ac-
 ‘ cording to *your* Duty and Power, to suppress
 ‘ the Errors and Heresies that are spread in the
 ‘ Kingdom, all these Errors are *your* Errors, and
 ‘ these Heresies are *your* Heresies ; they are *your*
 ‘ Sins ; and God calls for a Parliamentary-Re-
 ‘ pentance from you for them this Day. *You*
 ‘ are the *Anabaptists* ; you are the *Antinomians* ;
 ‘ and ’tis *you* that hold, that all Religions are
 ‘ to be tollerated, &c. These are *your* Errors,
 ‘ if they spread by *Connivance* ; for the Sins of
 ‘ old *Eli*’s Sons, are imputed to *Eli* himself ; and
 ‘ when the *Israelites* had prophan’d the Sabbath,
 ‘ *Nebemiah* told the Nobles of *Judah*, that it
 ‘ was they that did prophane it, because they
 ‘ suffer’d the People to prophane it. *Nebemiah*
 ‘ xiii. 17.

Mr. Mat. Newcomen, in a Sermon before the Par-
 liament, Sept. 12, 1644, hath these Words :

‘ Nothing

' Nothing will satisfy some, but a Tollera-
 ' tion of all Religions, and all Opinions.
 ' Church-Government and Discipline is to some
 ' a Fiction, to others a Tyranny and Persecu-
 ' tion. Ah, Brethren ! this is a Provocation,
 ' and will be a Provocation ; for this, God may
 ' turn us into the Wilderness again. And at
 some Distance hence, he farther expresses him-
 self after this Manner : ' We are come to down-
 ' right Libertinism. There are two Opinions,
 ' which, if encourag'd, will open a Door to
 ' *Turcism, Judaism, Atheism, Polytheism*, any Mon-
 ' ster of Opinion. The one is, that every Man
 ' is to be left to the Liberty of his own Reli-
 ' gion ; an Opinion the most pernicious and
 ' destructive, as to the Souls of Men, so to the
 ' Common-weal of the Kingdom. That Li-
 ' berty of believing what Men will, (or of
 ' holding what Faith they please) is no other
 ' than a Liberty of erring, and of erring in a
 ' Matter that concerns the eternal Salvation of
 ' the Soul ; wherein to err, cannot but be most
 ' dangerous and destructive. Diversity of Re-
 ' ligion disjoins and distracts the Minds of
 ' Men, and is the Seminary of perpetual Ha-
 ' treds, Jealousies, Sedition, Wars, if any Thing
 ' in the World be ; and, in a little Time, ei-
 ' ther a Schism in the State, begets a Schism in
 ' the Church, or a Schism in the Church, be-
 ' gets a Schism in the State ; that is, either Re-
 ' ligion and the Church is prejudic'd by Civil
 ' Contentions, or Church-Controversies and
 ' Disputes about Opinions, break out into Civil
 ' Wars. Men will at last take up Swords and
 ' Spears,

Spears, instead of Pens, and defend by Arms what they cannot do by Arguments.

And after telling them their *Duty*, which was, to preserve and reform *Religion*, and extirpate *Heresy* and *Schism*, which they had covenanted to do; he lays before them the dismal *Consequences* of their *Supineness* in this most weighty Affair, and that with some Concern:

‘ For, says he, if once we come to this, that any Man be suffer’d to teach what he pleaseth, to seduce whom he list, to be of what Faith or Religion seems good in his own Eyes; farewell Covenant, farewell Reform’d Religion, farewell the Peace and Glory of *England*, if that Day once come! — It is not usual, nay, it is not possible, that they which love God sincerely, should desire to cherish differing Religions: For it is most certain, he that admits contrary Religions, believes neither of them.

Dr. *William Good*, in a Sermon before the *Commons*, March 26, 1645, delivers himself thus:

‘ I doubt not but your Souls abhor that bloody Tenet to the Souls of Men, That it is the Duty of the Magistrate to tolerate all Religions. What is it that shall be unlawful, if this be lawful, for every Man to make a Law and Religion for himself? — Such Allowance would prove destructive to Holiness, both personal and domestical: *Omnis Religio & nulla Religio*, A Toleration of all Religions, would soon dwindle into no Religion, &c.

Dr. Burgis to the Commons, April 30, 1645,
admonisheth them,

‘ To beware of those Compliances with, and
 ‘ Indulgences to all Sorts of Sects and Schisms,
 ‘ now pleaded for, both by Words and Wri-
 ‘ tings; as if it were Part of Christ’s Legacy,
 ‘ and his People’s Liberty, to be of what Re-
 ‘ ligion they will, (he brings a weighty Text or
 ‘ two of Scripture, to shew, that God himself
 ‘ will have *Uniformity in Religion*.) viz. *I will*
 ‘ *give them one heart, and one way, that they may*
 ‘ *fear me for ever, Jer. xxxii. 39.* That is, *That*
 ‘ *they may all call upon the Name of the Lord, to*
 ‘ *serve him with one consent, Zeph. iii. 9.* (He goes
 on.) ‘ Did Christ *ascend up on High*, and give
 ‘ *Gifts unto Men*, and give some *Apostles*, and some
 ‘ *Prophets*, some *Evangelists*, and some *Teachers*, for
 ‘ the perfecting of the Saints, for the *Work of the*
 ‘ *Ministry*, for the edifying of the Body of Christ,
 ‘ till we all come into the *Unity of the Faith*? And
 ‘ is it Persecution, and Anti-christianism, to en-
 ‘ gage all to Unity and Uniformity? Doth
 ‘ Paul bid the *Philippians* to beware of the *conci-*
 ‘ *sion*? Phil. iii. 2. Doth he beseech the *Ro-*
 ‘ *mans* to mark those which cause divisions and of-
 ‘ fences, contrary to the Doctrine which they had re-
 ‘ ceiv’d, and avoid them? And that upon this
 ‘ Ground, That they who are such, serve not the
 ‘ Lord Jesus, but their own bellies; however, by
 ‘ good words and fair speeches, they deceive the hearts
 ‘ of the simple? Rom. xvi. 17, 18. Doth he,
 ‘ (writing to the *Galatians*) wish, *I would they*
 ‘ *were cut off that trouble you*? Gal. v. 12. And,
 ‘ is it such an heinous Offence now, for the
 ‘ faithful

faithful Servants of Christ, to advise you to the same Course? O Heavens! be astonish'd at this, and blush for the Ignorance of some, and Impudence of others, that dare so boldly press for such a Toleration, which none but vain, destructive Thoughts of carnal Men, can look upon without Indignation and Horror.

' Beware, says he, how you hearken to those *Empyricks* and *Syrans*, who seek to charm the World into a deep Sleep, by presenting their Confidence of a Necessity of Compliance with all Sorts of Sectaries; yea, of trusting the Sword in their Hands, for fear of losing the Godly Party, (as too many proudly stile themselves, by way of Difference from all that are not of their Opinions and Ways.) What is this, but to teach God a new Form of Politicks? To proclaim, that it is not always safe to hold out the Truth of the Gospel, and to command all Men to embrace it; but much safer to halt between two Opinions? Belike, King *Josiah* went beyond his Bounds, when, after himself had sworn a solemn Covenant to the Lord, he made all *Judah* and *Benjamin* to stand to it; and made all that were present in *Israel*, to serve the Lord their God, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 32, 33. And *Asa* much more, when he drew the People into a Covenant, That whosoever would not seek the Lord God of *Israel*, should be put to death, whether small or great, man or women, 2 Chron. xv. 13. But the ample and transcendent Commendations, which the Lord gives unto these pious Kings, especially in Reference to their Sincerity, and

‘ Zeal of reforming and settling of Religion in
 ‘ one uniform Way, may sufficiently warrant
 ‘ and encourage all religious Magistrates to
 ‘ take Care, that all under their Government
 ‘ should serve the Lord with one Shoulder;
 ‘ this being not a Tyranny over Men, but the
 ‘ Privilege of the Gospel. Settle this in your
 ‘ Hearts : God’s Truth, the Worship and Disci-
 ‘ pline of Christ, set up and establish’d in one
 ‘ uniform Way, never prejudic’d any Nation or
 ‘ State, (where it had free Passage) in any the
 ‘ least Degree ; but hath ever been their Safe-
 ‘ ty, Happiness, and Honour. It is Error,
 ‘ (how much soever cry’d up) not Truth, (how
 ‘ much soever cry’d down and blasphem’d) that
 ‘ makes and foment’s Factions and Rents.—
 ‘ Let People enjoy their just Privileges and Li-
 ‘ berties, wherewith Christ hath made them
 ‘ free ; not such Licentiousness as is abus’d for
 ‘ a Cloak of Naughtiness.

In the Arguments of the *Scottish* Commissio-
 ners, *Page 3* and *4*, they press’d, in the first
 Place, ‘ Uniformity in Religion, as the only
 ‘ Means to preserve Peace, and to prevent ma-
 ‘ ny Divisions and Troubles : A Thing very
 ‘ becoming the King to promote, according to
 ‘ the Practice of the good Kings of *Judah* ; and
 ‘ a Thing which, they say, all sound Divines
 ‘ and Politicians are for.

*Mr. Calamy, January 14, 1645, in his Sermon
 before the Lord Mayor, breaks out into this
 Lamentation.*

‘ The Churches of Christ lie desolate ; Church-
 ‘ Reformation is obstructed ; Church-Discipline
 ‘ is

is unsettled; and Church-Divisions increas'd. The famous City of *London* is become an *Amsterdam*; Separation from our Churches, is countenanc'd; Toleration is cry'd up; Authority lieth asleep; Divisions, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Political, in Kingdoms, Cities, or Families, are infallible Causes of Ruin to them.

' Hereby the Hearts of People are mightily distracted; many are hinder'd from Conversion; and even the Godly themselves have lost much of the Power of Godliness in their Lives. I say, the Hearts of the People are mightily disturb'd, while one Minister preacheth one Thing as a Truth of the Gospel, and another Minister preacheth the quite contrary, with as much Confidence as the former.

' If Divisions be destructive to Kingdoms, Cities, and Families, this reproveth those that are the Authors and Fomenters of these Divisions that are now among us. These are the Incendiaries of *England*. If he that sets one House on Fire, deserveth hanging; how much more they that set a whole Kingdom on Fire? If he that murders one Man, must be put to Death; much more he that murders three Kingdoms? *Mark them* (saith the Apostle, *Romans* xvi. 17.) *that cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them*: Avoid them as the greatest Enemies to *England*. These are like the *Salamander*, that cannot live but in the Fire of Contention: These are of a Jesuitical Spirit; and no doubt, the Heads and Hands of the Jesuits are in all our Divisions.

He

He goes on, and makes an horrible Outcry against those that plead for an unlimited Toleration of all Religions; and earnestly prays God, to keep them from being poyson'd with such an Error. For (says he) *It will divide a Kingdom against it self; it will rend it in a thousand Pieces: It is a Doctrine that overthroweth all Church-Government; bringeth in Confusion, and openeth a wide Door unto all Irreligion and Atheism. For at the same Door that all false Religions come in, the true Religion will quickly get out. And if it be as good for a Man to live where nothing is lawful, as where all Things are lawful, surely 'tis every Way as uncomfortable, to live where there are all Religions, as where there is no Religion at all.*

He continues inveighing against the pernicious Consequences of allowing any Toleration; and prompts the Magistrates to use that Power that God hath given them, in suppressing these Differences in Religion, as far as they were able; that they might not be accounted accessory to them, by their supine Neglect in this, the Cause of God. *For (says he) you are the ministers of God for good; and revengers to execute wrath upon them that do evil, Rom. xiii. 4. and God hath deputed you, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. 1 Pet. ii. 14. Afterwards (says he) doth not God prophesy, Isa. xlix. 23. That kings shall be our nursing fathers, and queens our nursing mothers? And how can a Christian Magistrate discharge that Duty as he ought, if he hath not Power from God, to punish those that would poyson*
the

the Souls of his weak Children with Heresies, (for such he accounted all Toleration to be) and Soul-destroying Opinions? (He proceeds with branding Separation, with almost all the Ignominies that Tongue can express) such as infecting the People with Soul-destroying Errors; Grace-destroying Opinions; undoing the Souls of the Subjects; the Plague of Heresy upon the Soul, &c. And in his Conclusion of this Topick, he queries, ' Shall nor the chief Magistrate of a Kingdom, have Power to put out of his Kingdom, (at least shut up from doing hurt) one that is his Subject, and polluted with blasphemous, heretical, idolatrical Opinions? Is not the Kingdom the Magistrate's House and Family? This celebrated Preacher adds much more to the same Purpose.

One Thing (I must confess) seems to me to be very odd; that he that had so lately prompted the pulling down the Church of *England*, and destroying Regal Government, should now make use of *Isaiah's* Prophecy, *That Kings should be our nursing fathers, and queens our nursing mothers*; to induce the People to Obedience to the Government then in being, and the Magistrates to execute Laws that were made diametrically opposite to Kingly Government. Surely he might have found out a Text of Scripture less reflecting upon the then Establishment; and no doubt, would, if he had not lain under a violent Transport of Passion, in regard to the intolerable Sin of countenancing Separation! But whither will not some Mens Zeal carry them, in the most erroneous Opinions, even to the making

making the most impertinent Scriptural Quotations?

Now let us understand what the self-denying Mr. *Richard Baxter* says, in his Epistle to separate Congregations, *viz.*

‘ From Diversity in Opinion, and external
‘ Rites, resulteth Dislike: Thence Enmity,
‘ thence Opposition, thence Schism in Church,
‘ and Sedition in State; the State not standing
‘ secure without the Church, nor the Church
‘ without Unity, nor Unity without Uniformity.

‘ Consider this: ’Tis the Judgment of some,
‘ that Thousands are gone to Hell, and ten
‘ Thousands upon their March thither; that in
‘ all Probability; had never come there, if they
‘ had not been tempted from the Parish-Churches,
‘ for the Enjoyment of Communion in a purer
‘ Church.

Very fine, Master *Baxter*! Can you damn Thousands and ten Thousands, some already gone, and others in the high Road to Hell, for separating from your Usurpation, under the Pretext of greater Purity in Preaching and Prayer; and could you refuse to join your self to the Episcopal Church of *England*, when in its flourishing Estate, from the same Plea? Can you be angry with those that act upon the same Principles with your self?

Our Reverend Mr. *Baxter*, saith, in his Holy Common-Wealth, (*Addit. to Pref. Prop. 6.*) speaking of Civil Government.

‘ *Moses*

‘ *Moses* had to do in Matters of Religion, as a
 ‘ Magistrate ; and so had the ruling Elders that
 ‘ assisted him ; and so had the Kings of *Israel*
 ‘ and *Judah*, as it is well known ; insomuch,
 ‘ that in *Asa’s* Days, they covenanted to put
 ‘ him to Death, that would not seek the Lord
 ‘ God of *Israel*. Law and Providence are quite
 ‘ chang’d, if Toleration of false Worship, and
 ‘ other Abuses of Religion, tend not to the Ruin
 ‘ of the Common-Wealth.

Here it may be observ’d, that he charges all
 Worship, that was contrary to the Scheme then
 establish’d, to be false, tending to the Ruin of
 the Common-Wealth, to the Destruction of the
 Church, and of Mens Souls ; and he calls the
 prompting of Magistrates not to meddle with
 Matters of Faith and Worship, but to leave
 those Things to Christ above, to be the setting
 up Popery in *England*. All which plainly shews
 his Abhorrence of Separation ; and is a clear In-
 dication, that had he liv’d in the Days of the
 last Grant of Toleration, at the Beginning of
 the Reign of the late King *William*, and his
 Scheme of Religion had been establish’d, he
 would (as we vulgarly express it) Tooth and
 Nail have oppos’d the granting the same ;
 and I doubt not but such powerful Men as he,
 would have sway’d the Legislature.

Mr. *Baxter*, in Opposition to Mr. *Ainsworth’s*
 palliating the Sin of *Schism*, expresseth him-
 self, with relation to the *Mischief* of *Divisions*,
 thus :

‘ I look not upon them as petty Inconveni-
 ‘ ences, little Troubles to the Churches, the
 D Effects

' Effects of Levity, and Volubility of Mens
 ' Minds; (*Cure of Divisions*;) but (*in Defence*
 ' of his Cure, Pag. 3.) that the World, the
 ' Flesh, and the Devil, are the Causes from
 ' whence they come: That they are as
 ' much the Works of the Flesh, as Adulteries,
 ' Fornications, &c. (*Christian Directory*, Pag. 739.)
 ' That contentious Dividers, are carnal Men,
 ' and have not the Spirit: That Divisions are
 ' the wounding, nay, the killing of the Church,
 ' as much as lieth in the Dividers; and that
 ' to reform the Church, by dividing it, is no
 ' wiser, than to cut out the Liver, or Spleen,
 ' or Gall, to cleanse them from the Filth that
 ' both obstruct them, and hinder them in their
 ' Office. That Divisions are the Deformities of
 ' the Church, the Lamentations of Friends, and
 ' the Scorn of Enemies; the Dishonour of
 ' Christ and the Gospel; the great Hinderance
 ' of the Conversion and Salvation of the
 ' World, and of the Edification of the Mem-
 ' bers of the Church. That they fill the Church
 ' with Sins of a most odious Nature; they che-
 ' rish Pride, and Malice, and belying others,
 ' (the three great Sins of the Devil) as natural-
 ' ly as dead Flesh breedeth Worms. In a Word,
 ' the Scripture telleth us, That *where Envy*
 ' *and Strife is, there is Confusion, and every evil*
 ' *Work*; (and is not this a lamentable Way
 ' of Reformation of some imaginary, or lesser
 ' Evil?) ' They are uneasy to the Persons
 ' themselves, and rob them of the sweetest Part
 ' of Religion: They lead directly to Apostacy
 ' from the Faith, and shake States and King-
 ' doms, having a lamentable Influence on the
 Civil

Civil Peace. And, in *Pag.* 741, Schism is a Sin against so many, and clear, and vehement Words of the Holy Ghost, that 'tis utterly without Excuse: Whoredoms, Treason, and Perjury, are not oftner forbidden in the Gospel, than this: That it is contrary to the very Design of Christ in our Redemption; which was, to reconcile us to God, and to unite and centre us all in him: That it is contrary to the Design of the Spirit of Grace, and to the very Nature of Christianity it self: That it is a Sin against the nearest Bonds of our highest Relations to each other: That it is either a dividing Christ, or robbing him of a great Part of his Inheritance; and neither of these is a little Sin. That it is accompany'd with Self-Ignorance, and Pride, and great Unthankfulness to God: That Church-Dividers are the most successful Servants of the Devil, being Enemies to Christ, in his Family and Livery; and, that they serve the Devil more effectually than open Enemies. That *Schism* is a Sin which contradicteth all God's Ordinances, and Means of Grace, which are purposely to procure and maintain the Unity of his Church. That 'tis a Sin against as great and lamentable Experiences, as almost any Sin can be: And this is a heinous Aggravation of it, that it is commonly justify'd, and not repented of by those that commit it; and it is yet the more heinous, that it is commonly father'd upon God. *Lastly*, That it is most unlike the Heavenly State, and, in some Regard, worse than the Kingdom of the Devil; for he would not destroy it, by *dividing it against it self*. Re-

' member now, saith he, that *Schism*, and ma-
 ' king Parties and Divisions in the Church, is
 ' not so small a Sin, as many take it for. And,
 upon *Bagshaw's* lessening the Sin of Separation,
 he admonishes him after this Manner : ' Alas,
 ' dear Brother, that after so many Years Si-
 ' lencing and Affliction ; after Flames and
 ' Plagues, and dreadful Judgments ; after twen-
 ' ty Years Practice of the Sin it self, and when
 ' we are bury'd in the Ruins which it caus'd,
 ' we should not yet know that our own uncha-
 ' ritable Divisions, Alienations, and Separations,
 ' are a crying Sin ! Yea, *The crying Sin*, as
 ' well as the Uncharitableness and Hurtfulness
 ' of others. Alas ! will God leave us also, even
 ' us, to the Obdurateness of *Pharaoh* ? Doth not
 ' Judgment begin with us ? What have we done
 ' to Christ's Kingdom ; to this Kingdom ; to our
 ' Friends (dead and alive ;) to our selves, and,
 ' alas, to our Enemies, by our Divisions ! And,
 ' do we not feel it ? Do we not know it ? Is it to
 ' us, even to us, a Crime intolerable, to call
 ' us to Repentance ? Woe to us ! Into what
 ' Hard-heartedness have we sinn'd our selves ?
 ' Yea, that we should continue, and passionate-
 ' ly defend it ! When will God give us Repen-
 ' tance unto Life ?

One would have thought, morally speaking,
 that 'twas impossible to have accumulated so
 many tremendous Aggravations of the Sin of
Schism as our great Mr. *Baxter* has here enume-
 rated : But when I consider that he had been so
 lately himself an Offender herein, our Won-
 der hereat may in some measure vanish : His
 charging so deplorably the Offenders of those
 Times,

Times, in this Respect, might strike his own guilty Soul with Horror, for his late opposing the Establish'd Church. But if he, at the same Time that he charg'd others, lay under no Relentings, we may well judge of him, (to speak in his own Words, to his Brother *Bagshaw*, in the last Paragraph) that he was arriv'd to *Pharaoh's* Obdurateness. Thus far *Mr. Baxter*.

Mr. Case, in a Sermon before the Commons, May 26, 1647, expresses himself thus:

' Liberty of Conscience, falsely so call'd,
' may, in good Time, improve it self into Li-
' berty of Estates, Liberty of Houses, and Li-
' berty of Wives; and, in a Word, Liberty
' of Perdition of Souls and Bodies. (And a
little after, he admonisheth them) ' That they
' must be a *Terror to evil Doers*, unless they mean
' to bear the Sword in vain. For, says he, if
' you will, God will not; and if God take the
' Sword into his Hand once, he will smite to
' Purpose, and execute Vengeance thoroughly,
' both upon the *evil Doers*, and upon you that
' have not been a *Terror to them*. Oh! there-
' fore, up and be doing, that you may deliver
' the Kingdom out of the Hand of the Lord,
' for it is a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands
' of the living God. O let not your Patience
' be interpreted a Connivence, and your Con-
' nivence be taken for a Toleration; it may
' be the Kingdom's Ruin, but it will be your
' Sin.

This worthy Divine, not being able to bear the granting of Indulgence to any, how strenuously does he prompt the Government to take
the

the Sword into their Hands, and exercise it upon such wicked and bold Men, as dare to ask for a Toleration, by menacing them with God's Judgment, in case they refuse so to do !

Let us now look a little into the Debates between the Divines of the Assembly, and the Independents. The former charge the latter with *Schism*, for these two Things.

* *First*, For refusing Communion with those Churches which they confess'd to be true Churches. For, say the Members of the Assembly, Thus to depart from true Churches, is not to hold Communion with them as such, but rather by departing, to declare them not to be such.

Secondly, For setting up different Congregations, where they confess'd there was an Agreement in Doctrine.

The Desire of the Independents, as it was propos'd by themselves, at the Committee for Accommodation, *December 4, 1645*, was this ;

‘ That they may not be forc'd to communicate as Members, in those Parishes where they dwell ; but may have Liberty to have Congregations of such Persons who give good Testimonies of their Godliness, and yet out of Tenderness of Conscience, cannot communicate in their Parishes, but do voluntarily offer themselves to join in such Congregation.

To which, the Divines of the Assembly answer'd, *December 15*.

This

‘ This Desire is not to be granted them, for these Reasons.

‘ *First*, Because it holds out a plain and total Separation from the Rule; as if in nothing it were to be comply’d with, nor our Churches to be communicated with in any Thing, which should argue Church-Communion. More could not be said or done against false Churches.

‘ *Secondly*, ‘ It plainly holds out, the Lawfulness of gathering Churches out of true Churches, yea, out of such true Churches, which are endeavouring farther to reform, according to the Word of God; whereof we are assur’d, there is not the least Hint of any Example in all the Book of God.

‘ *Thirdly*, ‘ This would give Countenance to a perpetual *Schism* and *Division* in the Church, still drawing some from the Rule, which also would breed many Irritations among the Parties going away, and those whom they leave: And again, between the Church that should be forsaken, and that to which they should go.

December 23. The Dissenting Brethren put in their Reply to these Reasons.

To the first Reason they say,

‘ (1.) That gathering into other Congregations such who cannot, out of Tenderness of Conscience, partake as Members in their Churches, for the purer Enjoyment (as to their Consciences) of all Ordinances, yet still maintaining Communion with them as Churches, is far from Separation, much less a plain and total Separation. And this is not setting up Churches

ches against Churches, but Neighbour-Sister-Churches, of a different Judgment. For, say they, if the purest Churches in the World (unto our Judgment in all other Respects) should impose, as a Condition of receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, any one Thing that such tender Conscience cannot join in, (as suppose Kneeling in the Act of Receiving, which was the Case of *Scotland and England*) if they remove from these Churches, and have Liberty from a State, to gather into other Churches, to enjoy this and other Ordinances, this is no Separation.

(2.) ' That it is not a plain and total Separation from the Rule, unless they wholly in all Things differ, by setting up altogether different Rules of Constitution, Worship, and Government; but they shall practise the most of the same Things; and these the most substantial, which are found in the Rule it self.

(3.) ' That they would maintain occasional Communion with their Churches, not only in Hearing and Preaching, but occasionally in Baptizing their Children in their Churches, and Receiving the Lord's Supper there, &c.

And would not all this clear them from the Imputation of *Schism*? Not agreeing in the main Things? Not owning their Churches to be true? Not maintaining occasional Communion with them? Let us hear what the Divines of the Assembly think of all this.

Thus they answer,

(1.) ' That altho' Tendernefs of Conscience may bind Men to forbear, or suspend the Act of

of Communion in that Particular, wherein Men conceive they cannot hold Communion without Sin ; yet it doth not bind to follow such a positive Prescript, as possibly may be diverse of the Will and Council of God ; of which Kind, we conceive, this of gathering separate Churches out of true Churches, to be one.

(2.) ' It is one Thing to remove to a Congregation which is under the same Rule : In the former Case, a Man retains his Membership ; in the latter, he renounceth his Membership, upon Difference of Judgment, touching the very Constitution of the Churches, from, and unto which he removes.

(3.) ' If a Church do require that which is evil of any Member, he must forbear to do it, yet without Separation. They who thought Kneeling in the Act of Communion, to be unlawful, either in *England* or *Scotland*, did not separate, or renounce Membership ; but did some of them, with Zeal and Learning, defend our Church, against those of the Separation.

(4.) ' The Notion of Separation, is not to be measur'd by Civil Acts of State, but by the Word of God.

(5.) ' To leave all ordinary Communion in any Church, with Dislike, when Opposition or Offence offers it self, is to separate from such a Church, in the Scripture-Sense.

(6.) ' A total Difference from Churches, is not necessary to make a total Separation ; for the most rigid Separatists hold the same Rule of Worship and Government with our Bre-

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' thren :

‘ thren : And under this Pretence, *Novatians*,
 ‘ *Donatists*, all that ever were thought to sepa-
 ‘ rate, might shelter themselves.

(7.) ‘ If they may occasionally exercise these
 ‘ Acts of Communion with us once, a second,
 ‘ or third Time, without Sin ; we know no
 ‘ Reason why it may not be ordinary without
 ‘ Sin ; and then Separation and Church-gather-
 ‘ ing would have been needless. To separate
 ‘ from those Churches ordinarily and visibly,
 ‘ with whom occasionally you may join with-
 ‘ out Sin, seemeth to be a most unjust Separa-
 ‘ tion.

To the second Reason, the Dissenting Brethren
 gave these Answers.

(1.) ‘ That it was founded upon this Suppo-
 ‘ sition, That nothing is to be tolerated, which
 ‘ is unlawful in the Judgment of those who are
 ‘ to tolerate : Which the Divines of the As-
 ‘ sembly deny’d, and said, It was upon the
 ‘ Supposition of the Unlawfulness to tolerate
 ‘ gathering of Churches out of true Churches ;
 ‘ which they do not once endeavour to prove
 ‘ lawful.

(2.) ‘ That if after all Endeavours, Mens
 ‘ Consciences are unsatisfy’d, as to Communion
 ‘ with a Church ; they have no Obligation ly-
 ‘ ing upon them to continue in that Commu-
 ‘ nion ; or on the Churches, to with-hold them
 ‘ from removing to purer Churches ; or if there
 ‘ be none such, to gather into Churches.

To which, the Divines of the Assembly
 reply’d ;

First,

First, ' That this open'd a Gap for all Sects
' to challenge such a Liberty as their Due.

Secondly, ' This Liberty was deny'd by the
' Churches of *New-England*; and they have as
' just Ground to deny it as they.

To the third Reason, they answer'd;

(1.) ' That the Abuse of the Word *Schism*
' hath done much Hurt in the Churches; that
' the Signification of it was not yet agreed
' upon by the State, nor debated by the Af-
' sembly.

To which, the others reply,

' That if the Word *Schism* had been left out,
' the Reason would have remain'd strong, *viz.*
' That this would give Countenance to perpe-
' tual Division in the Church, still drawing
' away Churches from under the Rule. And to
' give Countenance to an unjust and causeless
' Separation from lawful Church-Communion,
' is not far from giving Countenance to a *Schism*;
' especially when the Grounds upon which this
' Separation is desir'd, are such, upon which all
' other possible Scruples, which erring Consci-
' ences may, in any other Case, be subject un-
' to, may claim the Privilege of a like Indul-
' gence: And so this Toleration being the first,
' shall indeed but lay the Foundation, and o-
' pen the Gap, whereas, as many Divisions in
' the Church, as there may be Scruples in the
' Minds of Men, shall, upon the self-same E-
' quity, be let in.

(2.) ' This will give Countenance only to
' Godly Peoples joining in other Congrega-
' tions,

' tions, for their greater Edification, who can-
 ' not otherwise, without Sin, enjoy all the Or-
 ' dinances of Christ; yet so, as not condemn-
 ' ing those Churches they join not with, as
 ' false, but still preserving all Christian Com-
 ' munion with the Saints, as Members of the
 ' Body of Christ, of the Church Catholick;
 ' and join also with them in all Duties of
 ' Worship which belong to particular Chur-
 ' ches, so far as they are able; and if this be
 ' call'd *Schism*, or Countenance of *Schism*, it is
 ' more than we have yet learn'd from Scrip-
 ' tures, or any approv'd Authors.

To this, the Divines of the Assembly
 reply'd;

First, ' This desir'd Forbearance, is a perpet-
 ' ual Division in the Church, and a perpetual
 ' drawing away from the Churches under the
 ' Rule: For, upon the same Pretence, those
 ' who scruple Infant-Baptism, may with-
 ' draw from their Churches, and so separate
 ' into another Congregation; and so in that,
 ' some Practice may be scrupled, and they
 ' separate again. Are these Divisions and Sub-
 ' divisions, say they, as lawful as they may
 ' be infinite? Or, must we give that Respect
 ' to the Errors of Mens Consciences, as to sa-
 ' tisfy their Scruples, by Allowance of this
 ' Liberty to them? And doth it not plainly
 ' signify, that Error of Conscience is a Pro-
 ' tection against *Schism*?

Secondly, ' The not condemning our Churches
 ' as false, doth little extenuate the Separation:
 ' For divers of the *Brownists*, who have totally
 ' separated

separated in former Times, have not condemn'd these Churches as false ; tho' they do not pronounce an affirmative Judgment against us, yet the very Separating is a tacit and practical condemning of our Churches, if not as false, yet as impure, *et cetera*; as that in such Administrations, they cannot be by them as Members communicated with without Sin : And when they speak of Communion with us, as Member of the Church Catholick, it is as full a declining of Communion with us as Churches, as if we were false Churches.

' *Thirdly*, ' We do not think Differences in Judgment in this or that Point, to be *Schism*, or that every Inconformity unto every Thing us'd or enjoin'd, is *Schism* ; so that Communion be preserv'd, or that Separation from idolatrous Communion or Worship, (*ex se* unlawful) is *Schism* : But to join in separate Congregations of another Communion ; which Succession of our Members, is a manifest Rupture of our Societies into others, and is therefore a *Schism* in the Body : And if the Apostle do call those Divisions of the Church, wherein Christians did not separate into divers formed Congregations, of several Communions in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, *Schisms* ; much more may such Separation as this desir'd, be so call'd.

' *Fourthly*, ' Scruple of Conscience is no Cause of separating ; nor doth it take off causeless Separation from being *Schism*, which may arise from Errors of Conscience, as well as carnal and corrupt Reasons : Therefore we
' conceive

‘ conceive the Causes of Separation must be
 ‘ shewn to be such *ex naturâ rei*, as will bear
 ‘ it out ; and therefore we say, that the grant-
 ‘ ing the Liberty desir’d, will give Counte-
 ‘ nance to *Schism*.

Fifthly, ‘ We cannot but take it for granted,
 ‘ upon Evidence of Reason, and Experience of
 ‘ all Ages, that this Separation will be the
 ‘ Mother and Nurse of Contentions, Strifes,
 ‘ Envyings, Confusions, and so draw with it
 ‘ that Breach of Love, which may endanger
 ‘ the heightening of it into formal *Schism*, even
 ‘ in the Sense of our Brethren.

Sixthly, ‘ What is it that approv’d Authors
 ‘ do call *Schism*, but the breaking off Members
 ‘ from their Churches, which are lawfully con-
 ‘ stituted Churches, and from Communion in
 ‘ Ordinances, &c. without just and sufficient
 ‘ Cause, *ex naturâ rei*, to justify such Secession,
 ‘ and to join in other Congregations of se-
 ‘ parate Communion, either because of Perso-
 ‘ nal Failings in the Officers, or Members of
 ‘ the Congregation from which they separate ;
 ‘ or because of causeless Scruple of their own
 ‘ Conscience, which hath been call’d setting
 ‘ up *Altare contra Altare* ; for which they quote
 ‘ *St. Augustin, Cameron*.

This being the true State of the Controver-
 sy about Separation in the late Times, be-
 tween the *Presbyterians*, when they had the As-
 cendent both in Church and State, and the
Independents, &c. who su’d for Liberty of Con-
 science, but could not upon any Terms obtain
 it : Let us now observe what that Right
 Reverend, Learned, and truly Judicious Prelate,

Dr. Stil-

Dr. *Stillingfleet* faith, with Relation to this Controversy, who, after he had undeniably prov'd, that not only the old Nonconformists, but also that the late Assembly of Divines, have strenuously condemn'd those of the Separation, for dividing from the Establish'd Church, upon such Trifles for which they contended, lays down these five Particulars, *viz.*

First, ' That the old Nonconformists did think themselves bound in Conscience to communicate with the Church of *England*; and did look upon Separation from it, to be Sin, notwithstanding the Corruptions they supposed to be in it. This (says he) I have prov'd with so great Evidence, in the foregoing Discourse, (in his Book of the *Unreasonableness of Separation*, Page 73.) that those who deny it, may, with the Help of the same Metaphysics, deny that the Sun shines.

Secondly, ' That all Men were bound in Conscience, towards preserving the Union of the Church, to go as far as they were able. This was not only asserted by the Nonconformists, but by the most rigid Separatists of former Times, and by the Dissenting Brethren themselves. So that the Lawfulness of Separation, where Communion is lawful, and thought so to be by the Persons who separate, is one of the newest Inventions of this Age: But what new Reasons they have for it, besides Noise and Clamour, I am yet to seek.

Thirdly, ' That bare Scruple of Conscience, doth not justify Separation, although it may excuse Non-communication in the Particulars which

‘ which are scrupled; provided that they have
 ‘ us’d the best Means for a right Informa-
 ‘ tion.

Fourthly, ‘ That where occasional Commu-
 ‘ nion is lawful, constant Communion is a
 ‘ Duty. Which follows from the Divines of
 ‘ the Assembly blaming the Dissenting Bre-
 ‘ thren, for allowing the Lawfulness of occa-
 ‘ sional Communion with our Churches, and
 ‘ yet forbearing ordinary Communion with
 ‘ them. For (say they) to separate from those
 ‘ Churches ordinarily and visibly, with whom
 ‘ occasionally you may join, seemeth to be a
 ‘ most unjust Separation.

Fifthly, ‘ That withdrawing from the Com-
 ‘ munion of a true Church, and setting up
 ‘ Congregations for purer Worship, or under
 ‘ another Rule, is plain and downright Sepa-
 ‘ ration; as is most evident from the Answer
 ‘ of the Divines of the Assembly, to the Dis-
 ‘ senting Brethren. Thus far that Great Man.

I shall add hereto, the *London Ministers Let-
 ter*, presented the first of *January*, 1645, to
 the Assembly of Divines, sitting at *Westminster*,
 by Authority of Parliament, against Toleration;
 the which I shall give you at length, directed
 as follows.

To our Reverend, Learned, and Religious Brethren, the PROLOCUTOR, and the rest of the DIVINES Assembled, and now Sitting at Westminster, by Authority of PARLIAMENT, these Present.

Reverend and Beloved Brethren,

WE are exceedingly apprehensive of the Desirableness of the Churches Peace, and of the Pleasantness of Brethrens Unity, knowing, that when Peace is set upon its proper Basis, viz. Righteousness and Truth, it is one of the best Possessions, both delectable and profitable; like *Aaron's Ointment*, and the *Dew of Hermon*. It is true, by Reason of different Lights, and different Sights among Brethren, there may be dissenting in Opinion; yet, why should there be any separating from Church-Communion? The Church's Coat may be of divers Colours; yet, why should there be any Rent in it? Have we not a Touch-stone of Truth, the Word of God? And when all Things are examin'd by this Word, then that which is best may be held fast; but first they must be known, and then examin'd afterwards. If our Dissenting Brethren, after so many importunate Intreaties, would have been perswaded (either in Zeal to the Truth, or in sincere Love to the Churches Peace and Unity among Brethren, or in Respect to their own Reputation, by fair and ingenuous Dealing, or in Conscience

' to their Promise made to the Ministers of
 ' *London*, now five Years since, or any such
 ' like reasonable Consideration) at last, to have
 ' given us a full Narrative of their Opinions,
 ' and Grounds of their Separation, we are per-
 ' swaded they would not have stood at such a
 ' Distance from us, as now they do: But they
 ' choose rather to walk by their own private
 ' Lights, than to unbosom themselves to us,
 ' their most affectionate Brethren; and to set
 ' themselves in an untrodden Way of their own
 ' rather than to wait what our Covenanted Re-
 ' formation, according to the Word of God, and
 ' Examples of the best Reform'd Churches
 ' would bring forth. But the Offence doth
 ' not end here; it is much that our Brethren
 ' should separate from the Church; but that
 ' they should endeavour to get a Warrant to au-
 ' thorize their Separation from it, and to have
 ' Liberty (by drawing Members out of it) to
 ' weaken and diminish it, 'till (so far as lies in
 ' them) they have brought it to nothing: This
 ' we think to be plainly unlawful; yet this, we
 ' understand, is their present Design and En-
 ' deavour. Wherefore,

' (*Reverend Brethren,*) having had such large
 ' Experience of your Zeal of God's Glory, your
 ' Care of his afflicted Church, your earnest En-
 ' deavours to promote the compleat Reformati-
 ' on of it, and of your ready Concurrence with
 ' us, in the Improvement of any Means that
 ' might be found conducive to this End; we
 ' are bold to hint unto you, these our ensuing
 Reason

Reasons against the Toleration of Independency in this Church.

First. ' The Desires and Endeavours of Independency for a Toleration, are, at this Time, extremely unseasonable and preposterous : For,

(1.) ' The Reformation of Religion is not yet perfected and settled among us, according to our Covenant. And why may not the Reformation be rais'd up, at last, to such Purity and Perfection, that truly tender Consciences may receive abundant Satisfaction, for ought that yet appears?

(2.) ' It is not yet known what the Government of the *Independents* is; neither would they ever yet vouchsafe to let the World know what they hold in that Point, tho' some of their Party have been too forward to challenge the *London-Petitioners*, as led with blind Obedience, and pinning their Souls upon the Priests Sleeves, for desiring an Establishment of the Government of Christ, before there was any Model of it exant.

(3.) ' We can hardly be perswaded, that the *Independents* themselves (after all the Stirs they have made amongst us) are, as yet, fully resolv'd about their own Way, wherewith they would be concluded; seeing they publish not their Model, (tho' they are nimble enough in publishing other Things) and they profess Reserves, and new Lights, for which they will (no Doubt) expect the like Toleration, and so *in infinitum*. It were more seasonable to sue for Toleration, when once they are positive-

ly determin'd how far they mean to go, and where they mean to stay.

Secondly. Their Desires and Endeavours are unreasonable, and unequal in divers Regards.

(1.) Partly, because no such Toleration hath hitherto been establish'd (as far as we know) in any Christian State, by the Civil Magistrate.

(2.) Partly, because some of them have solemnly profess'd, that they cannot suffer *Presbytery*: And answerable hereunto is their Practice, in those Places where Independency prevails.

(3.) And partly, because to grant to them, and not to other Sectaries, who are free-born, as well as they, and have done as good Service as they to the Publick, (as they us'd to plead) will be counted Injustice and great Partiality; but to grant it unto all, will scarce be clear'd from great Impiety.

Thirdly. Independency is a *Schism*: For,

(1.) *Independents* do depart from our Churches, being true Churches, and so acknowledg'd by themselves.

(2.) They draw and seduce our Members from our Congregations.

(3.) They erect separate Congregations, under a separate and undiscover'd Government.

(4.) They refuse Communion with our Churches in the Sacraments.

(5.) Their Ministers refuse to preach among us as Officers.

(6.) Their

(6.) ' Their Members, if at any time they
' join with us, in hearing the Word and Prayer,
' yet they do it not as with the ministerial Word
' and Prayer, nor as Acts of Church-Communion.

' Now, we judge that no *Schism* is to be tole-
' rated in the Church; * *ῥισμάτα*, 1 Cor. i. 10.
1 Cor. xii. 25. † *διχομασίας*, Rom. vi. 17. with
1 Cor. iii. 3. Gal. v. 20.

Fourthly. ' Many Mischiefs will inevitably
' follow upon this Toleration, and that
' both to Church and Commonwealth.

I. ' To the Church; as,

(1.) ' Causeless and unjust Revolts from our
' Ministry and Congregations.

(2.) ' Our Peoples Minds will be troubled,
' and in Danger to be subverted, as *Acts* xv. 24.

(3.) ' Bitter Heart-burnings among Brethren,
' will be fomented and perpetuated to Posterity.

(4.) ' The Godly, Painful, and Orthodox Mi-
' nistry, will be discourag'd and despis'd.

(5.) ' The Life and Power of Godliness will
' be eaten out by frivolous Disputes, and vain
' Janglings.

(6.) ' The whole Course of Religion, in pri-
' vate Families, will be interrupted and under-
' min'd.

(7.) ' Reciprocal Duties between Persons of
' nearest and dearest Relations, will be extream-
' ly violated.

(8.) ' The whole Work of Reformation, espe-
' cially in Discipline and Government, will be
' retarded, disturb'd, and in Danger of being
' made utterly frustrate and void, whilst every
' Person shall have Liberty, upon every trivial
' Discontent

* *Schisms.* † *Divisions.*

‘ Discontent at *Presbyterial* Government and
 ‘ Churches, to revolt from us, and list them-
 ‘ selves in separate Congregations.

(9.) ‘ All other Sects and Heresies in the
 ‘ Kingdom will be encourag’d to endeavour the
 ‘ like Toleration.

(10.) ‘ All other Sects and Heresies in the
 ‘ Kingdoms will safeguard and shelter them-
 ‘ selves under the Wings of *Independency*: And
 ‘ some of the *Independents*, in their Books, have
 ‘ openly avow’d, that they plead for Liberty of
 ‘ Conscience, as well for others, as themselves.

(11.) ‘ And the whole Church of *England*, in
 ‘ short Time, will be swallow’d up with Distrac-
 ‘ tion and Confusion. And God is not the *Author* of Confusion, but of Peace, 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

II. To the Commonwealth; for,

(1.) ‘ All these Mischiefs in the Church
 ‘ will have their proportionable Influence upon
 ‘ the Commonwealth.

(2.) ‘ The Kingdom will be wofully distracted
 ‘ by Scandal and Divisions; so that the Ene-
 ‘ mies of it, both Domestical and Foreign, will
 ‘ be encourag’d to plot and practise against it.

(4.) ‘ It is much to be doubted, lest the Power
 ‘ of the Magistrate should not only be weakned,
 ‘ but even utterly overthrown, considering the
 ‘ Principles and Practices of *Independents*, toge-
 ‘ ther with their Compliance with other Secta-
 ‘ ries, sufficiently known to be Anti-Magistra-
 ‘ tical.

Fifthly. ‘ Such a Toleration is utterly repug-
 ‘ nant and inconsistent with that solemn
 ‘ League

‘ League and Covenant, for Reformation
 ‘ and Defence of Religion, which not only
 ‘ both Houses of Parliament, but also Per-
 ‘ sons of all Sorts, in both Kingdoms of
 ‘ *England* and *Scotland*, have subscrib’d, and
 ‘ with Hands lifted up to the most High
 ‘ God, have sworn: Which Covenant
 ‘ likewise both you and me, and those
 ‘ that most earnestly pursue the Establish-
 ‘ ment of this Toleration, have made (or
 ‘ should have made) in the Presence of
 ‘ Almighty God, the Searcher of all Hearts,
 ‘ with a true Intention to perform the
 ‘ same, as we shall answer at that great
 ‘ Day, when the Secrets of all Hearts shall
 ‘ be disclos’d: For,

(1.) ‘ This is opposite to the Reformation of
 ‘ Religion, according to the Word of God, and
 ‘ the Examples of the best Reform’d Churches.

‘ *Art. I.*

(2.) ‘ It is destructive to the three Kingdoms
 ‘ nearest Conjunction and Uniformity in Reli-
 ‘ gion and Government, which might lead us,
 ‘ and our Posterity after us, as Brethren, to live
 ‘ in Faith and Love. *Art. I.*

(3.) ‘ It is plainly contrary to that Extirpa-
 ‘ tion of *Schism*, and whatsoever shall be found
 ‘ contrary to sound Doctrine, and the Power of
 ‘ Godliness, which we have sworn sincerely,
 ‘ really, and constantly to endeavour, without
 ‘ Respect of Persons. *Art. II.*

(4.) ‘ Hereby we shall be involv’d in the
 ‘ Guilt of other Mens Sins, and thereby be en-
 ‘ danger’d to receive of their Plagues. *Art. II.*

(5.) ‘ It

(5.) ' It seems utterly impossible, (if such Toleration should be granted) that the Lord should be one, and his Name one, in the three Kingdoms. *Art. II.*

(6.) ' This will palpably hinder the Reformation of Religion; inevitably divide one Kingdom from another; and unhappily make Parties and Factions among the People, contrary to this League and Covenant: Of which evil Offices, whosoever shall be found guilty, are reputed, in the Words of the Covenant, Incendiaries, Malignants, or evil Instruments, to be discover'd, that they may be brought to publick Tryal, and receive condign Punishment. *Art. IV. and V.*

' These are some of the many Considerations which make deep Impression on our Spirits, against that great *Liana* of *Independents*, and all the Sectaries, so much cry'd up by them in these distracted Times, *viz. A Toleration, a Toleration.* And, however, none should have more joyc'd than our selves, in the Establishment of a Brotherly, Peaceable, and Christian Accommodation; yet, this being utterly rejected by them, we cannot dissemble how, upon the fore-mention'd Grounds, we detest and abhor the much endeavour'd Toleration. Our Bowels, our Bowels are stirr'd within us; and we could even drown our selves in Tears, when we call to Mind, how long and sharp a Travel this Kingdom hath been in for many Years together, to bring forth that blessed Fruit of a pure and perfect Reformation: And now, at last, after all our Pangs, and Dolours, and Expectations, this real and thorough Reformation

formation is in Danger of being strangled in the Birth, by a lawless Toleration, that strives to be brought forth before it.

Wherefore (*Reverend and beloved Brethren*) we could not satisfy our selves, till we had made some Discovery of our Thoughts unto you about this Matter; not that we can harbour the least Jealousy of your Zeal, Fidelity, or Industry, in the opposing and extirpating of such a Root of Gall and Bitterness as Toleration is, and will be, both in present and future Ages; but that we may, what lies in us, endeavour mutually to strengthen one another's Resolutions against the present growing Evils; and that our Consciences may not smite us another Day for sinful Silence, or sluggish Deficiency, in any Point of Duty tending to the Glory of Christ, Honour of the Truth, Peace of the Church, Perfection of Reformation, Performance of our Covenant, and Benefit of present and succeeding Generations.

Subscrib'd by Us,

Your affectionate Brethren and Fellow-Labourers in the Work of the Ministry, to whom Truth and Peace is very precious.

From Sion-College,
London, Dec. 18.
1645.

I could add the Sentiments of many other eminent Divines of the Separation, who in their several Turns of Government, have express'd

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their

their great Abhorrence of tolerating any Opinion in *Religion*, but what was then establish'd. But this being intended chiefly to inform the more *Ignorant*, I shall not swell this above the Power of most mean People to purchase it. However, I shall hint one Thing to our *Dissenting Brethren*, not a little remarkable, *viz.* That the Government of *England*, the Church of which is establish'd under *Episcopacy*, hath granted *Toleration* to all Opinions of *Dissenters*, which, 'tis well known, that not any one of them, when uppermost, would grant to any. Therefore, *my Brethren*, if the granting *Liberty of Conscience*, be in it self an Act of *Condescension*, *Good Nature*, and *Christian Charity*; then it must be own'd, that the Church of *England*, under the Government by *Bishops*, has more *Humility*, more *Humanity*, and more *Christian Love*, than all the several *Sects*, taken together, of which the *Separation* is compos'd; which should induce People to consider, that where these *Graces* abound, they may expect true *Piety*. And I am very sensible, by the Observations I have made for forty Years past, that those that have the greatest Prejudice to the Establish'd *Worship* of the Church of *England*, are the Persons that know the least of it.

The *common People*, who are generally very ignorant, have been taught the popular Cry of *Popery!* *Popery!* though not one in twenty knows what it means: They know not, nor will believe, that the *Priests* of *Rome* first gave that reproachful Epithet to the *Common-Prayer*, on purpose to make the unthinking People abhor it, and then to separate from it. And (God knows)

knows) they have been wofully successful herein, and have so blinded the Eyes of many well-meaning People, with Relation to the *Common-Prayer*, that many of them think it to be no other than the *Mass-Book* it self: And others, that it was taken out of the *Mass-Book*. But if they knew the Antiquity of some of the Prayers in the *Common-Prayer-Book*, which were of Use in the Christian Church, long before any Notion of *Popery*, they would, and might justly say, the *Mass* was added to the *Common-Prayer* by the Church of *Rome*; and that it's Errors were taken away at our *English* Reformation.

Some think meanly of our *Liturgy*, for that it is call'd *Common-Prayer*; but let such know, that good Prayers, with true *Devotion*, cannot be too common. But the most worthy and ingenious Mr. *Clutterbuck*, in his *Vindication and Explanation of the Liturgy of the Church of England*, has rightly defin'd the same; which he has curiously done in few Words, by way of *Question* and *Answer*: I'll give it you in his own Words, viz.

Q. *Why is the Liturgy of the Church of England, call'd Common-Prayer?*

A. *Because all the Members have a Common Interest; and in that Form, all of the same Communion, are to join.*

This Book I have now quoted, is bound, at the Price of Nine-Pence, so that it may easily be purchas'd; and I would gladly recommend it to all Masters of Families, whether they be *Dissenters*, or of our own Communion.

First, To those that are not join'd to the Establish'd Church; for if they would first peruse the *Common-Prayer-Book*, and then this *Explanation*, it will plainly shew them wherein they have been mis-inform'd, with Relation to *Idolatry* or *Superstition*; and that in the said *Prayer-Book*, there is not the least Tendency to either; but that all the Parts of Prayer, such as *Confession*, *Absolution*, *Deprecation*, *Intercession*, *Thanksgiving*, &c. are so excellently laid together, in such *poetick*, and yet plain *Expressions*, that may edify the meanest, as well as improve the largest Capacities; being compil'd in most significant *Words* and *Phrases*; and as they are adapted to all *Conditions* and *Circumstances* of *Man*, so they are address'd to the *True God*, and *Holy Trinity*, in the most proper *Postures*, and humble *Gestures*, and such as become us, when we address the *Majesty* of *Heaven*. The *Romish* Doctrines of *Indulgences*, *Transubstantiation*, *Prayers for the Dead*, *Invocation of Saints and Angels*; the *Five Sacraments*, of *Marriage*, *Orders*, *Confirmation*, *Penance*, and *Extreme Unction*, added to those instituted by our Saviour, viz. *Baptism*, and the *Lord's Supper*; the *Superstition of Pilgrimages*, *Visiting of Shrines*, *Use of Holy Water*, (as they call it) are enjoin'd by them to be believ'd, on Pain of Damnation. But these, and all other Doctrines and Matters, held by them dissonant to the *Holy Scriptures*, are by the Church of *England* abhorr'd and exploded; notwithstanding some, that are Enemies to our *Church*, have maliciously and wickedly suggested, that we hold the same with the Church of *Rome*.

Secondly,

Secondly, To those People that are actually of *Us*, for this little Tract will inflame their Love of it, by increasing their *Devotion*, and will also enable them to answer all *Objections* made against it.

And now, I presume, I have sufficiently demonstrated the Nature of *Schism*; and by the Sentiments of several of the ablest of the late *Dissenting Teachers*, made it appear to be not only a *Sin*, but a *Sin* of the first *Magnitude*, and not at any Rate to be indulg'd to any.

I might here also make it appear, that all the *Reform'd Churches* of *Christendom*, (who have had a true State of the *Controversy* between the Church of *England*, and those *Natives* that separate from it) have condemn'd and censur'd most severely, those that dissent from our *Establish'd Church*, upon such trifling Plea's, that if granted and allow'd, would make Way for almost as many *Separations*, as there are People in the *Kingdom*. For most Persons that pretend to *Scruples* of *Conscience*, have such an Opinion of their own *Wisdom* in almost every Matter, especially in the weighty one of *Religion*, that nothing can be done to any Purpose, where they sit not at the Helm, to be the principal Directors. But this Argument I have reserv'd for a Tract of greater Bulk, which, by the *Blessing* of *God*, in due Time, may appear in the World.

Near the Beginning of this Discourse, I promis'd to make appear the dangerous Consequence of continuing in the Sin of *Schism*; but those worthy *Divines* before recited, have, in their *Sermons* and other *Writings*, clearly demonstrated,

monstrated, not only what is *Schism*, and its being a *Sin* of the deepest Dye; but also the *evil Consequences* of it in every Respect, with Relation to the Peace of the *Church*, the Security of the *State*, and the harmonious *Agreement* of the People in general; to all which it is destructive: But above all, and the most deplorable Consequence is, that it hazzards the *eternal Welfare* of *Souls*. These Authors having spoken so fully, have left no Room for me to set forth any Thing beyond their *Aggravations*.

But I think I may add thus much, That if the least *Sin* unrepented of, renders a Man liable to *eternal Damnation*; what will be the Lot of those that live habitually in a *Sin* of this Complexion, with so many *Aggravations* attending it; but, by their continual provoking the *Almighty* in this Life, to cause him to pour out upon them, the *hottest Vials* of his *Wrath*, *eternally* in the World to come? Which I pray *God* they may prevent, by a speedy and sincere *Repentance*, for continuing so long in this *Sin*; and by a hearty Compliance with the *establiſh'd Church*; by attending on its *Preaching*, by joining with the parochial *Assemblies* in the *publick Worship*, and *Sacraments*. And if they do this, the *Church* will graciously and affectionately receive them, we shall rejoyce in their Fellowship; *Party* and *Division* will cease; our gracious *SOVEREIGN*, the best of *PRINCES*, will be easy in his *Government*, and happy in an *obedient* and *loyal People*: And our Land, instead of being an *Aceldama*, will justly be esteem'd the *Joy of the Earth*.

Such

Such a Compliance will render our Circumstances not barely *tolerable*, but will exalt them beyond *Expression*. The Intrigues of *Rome*, for reducing this *Church* (which is their principal Design and Aim) to false *Doctrine* in *Fundamentals*, and *Idolatry* and *Superstition* in *Worship*, would be vain to such a Degree, that they would themselves despair of ever attaining those Ends, which they can never accomplish, but by the Means of our own *Divisions*. And I would to God, those that separate from us, would seriously weigh, and lay these Things to Heart, and consider, that 'tis in their Power to prevent the Designs of the *Papists*, whose Hopes depend purely upon our *Disagreements*; and who are secretly and continually fomenting them, against this *Establish'd Church*.

Such an harmonious Agreement among the good People of this Land, would not only (under God) secure the establish'd *Religion* of *England*, but would likewise be a proper Means to secure the *State*; for that all domestick *Differences* would cease; **Schism** would forever be banish'd; the terrible Fears of *Poverty* would vanish; the *Pretensions* of the *Genoese* at *Lorrain* ridicul'd; the *Ambition* and *Power* of *France* would be contemn'd, and the *British Nation* flourish, both in *Peace* at Home, and *Traffique* Abroad, to the *Admiration* of the *Universe*.

F I N I S.

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